

TRANSCRIPT OF ROADLESS RULE
ANILCA SUBSISTENCE PUBLIC HEARING

YAKUTAT, ALASKA
11/5/2019

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Yakutat, Alaska - 11/5/2019)

3 (On record)

4 MS. HANLON: My name is Jennifer Hanlon. Last
5 name is spelled H-A-N-L-O-N. I speak as an individual,
6 not as an employee or affiliate of any organization.
7 My lineage is Yakutat Tlingit. My cultural identity
8 and livelihood strongly relates to the area now known
9 as the Tongass National Forest. My family has been
10 living off the land, also referred to as subsistence,
11 for countless generations. So this area and making
12 sure that it is properly managed to respect those
13 resources, thus taking care of our community and our
14 family, is really the reason why I feel compelled to
15 speak out.

16 There is a lot of concerns of how any future
17 development might affect our way of life and cultural
18 identify and ultimately our socioeconomic well-being
19 that really ties into protecting our fisheries, our
20 clean water, the animals and everything else that we
21 depend on.

22 It's not just based on culture. It is largely
23 tied into our economy as well. It's not based on cash
24 transactions, but it's nevertheless important to our
25 community and our family is that we sustain this and

1 thus I speak against full exemption of the Roadless
2 Rule to the Tongass to assure that current and future
3 generations have the same nourishment that has been
4 provided to us since time immemorial.

5 With that, that concludes my oral comments. I
6 will be sure to follow up with written. Gunalcheesh.
7 Thank you for your time.

8 MR. HEITHECKER: Gunalcheesh. Can I ask if
9 anybody else has a formal comment they want to offer
10 for the record. Your name, sir.

11 MR. BULLER: John Buller, B-U-L-L-E-R. So I'm
12 affiliated with the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, which is a
13 Federally recognized tribe. I am the tribal president
14 and I'm also here to represent the clans from Yakutat
15 and to speak for the elders so that you can hear the
16 teachings that they've instilled in us. The number one
17 rule is respect. That's to respect the land for the
18 future.

19 Right now this decision seems too hasty just to
20 go full exemption and open anything up without taking
21 the time to really think beyond 40 years, 100 years,
22 200 years. If we take the time now to think and to
23 watch the world, things are slipping out of control.

24 So to open this up, to start exploiting the
25 land to take more, how much is enough. How much is

1 going to be enough. I think we need to take more time
2 to sit down and speak with respect for the land and
3 consideration for that for the future generations.

4 The Yakutat Tlingit Tribe is standing with the
5 other tribes who are opposing the exemption and we're
6 asking for no action as the alternative. Thank you.

7 MR. HEITHECKER: Thank you, sir. Do we have
8 anybody else who wants to make a formal comment?

9 MR. JAMES: My name is Daryl James, J-A-M-E-S,
10 speaking on my behalf, for myself and this area that we
11 come from. I'm in favor of Alternative 6 for full
12 exemption.

13 The use of the land is very important to me and
14 the freedom to do so. I've watched changes through a
15 few years and each change brings more shackles of
16 restriction. I think it's wrong because it's -- as I
17 use that phrase shackles of restriction, the chains of
18 economic enslavement to me.

19 The use of the land and the areas before this
20 area was set aside, particularly the legislative led to
21 and other areas to the Dangerous River being closed
22 off to ATV use. ATV use it's not to the size of the
23 land that we have here. It's minuscule to me. Walking
24 in, we do walk in and hunt and then you go in and get
25 them out, but this area it is opposition and we need to

1 look at the right of the people to use the land without
2 destroying it.

3 There's only one way now that the people can
4 use that area and that's ATV. We used to have air
5 taxis. They no longer operate in this area after
6 October 15th and they don't start operation until April
7 15th, April 5th, something like that, and we can't get
8 out on the land even for commercial fishing.
9 Commercial fishing is one of the big sources of income
10 in this community. In the recent past, sport fishing
11 has started to push it aside.

12 The air taxi that operates here favors the
13 sport fishermen to use the different resources. The
14 Akwe, the Italio River, the Alsek River, the East
15 River, were all at one time used and fished by the
16 community. Now we can't get there because the
17 operators that are in this area will not fly commercial
18 fishermen.

19 There's a need for access by ATV or some other
20 access that we need to discuss among ourselves. We
21 need to make decisions at the local level, not imposed
22 from outside sources. That's what we've seen in the
23 last few years is imposed from outside sources.

24 There's a discussion on T-77. That was also
25 imposed on Yakutat with very little discussion and I

1 question that. Thank you.

2 MR. HEITHECKER: Thank you, Mr. James. Anybody
3 else?

4 MR. RUBBO: Jonathan Rubbo, originally from San
5 Diego. I've been in Southeast Alaska going on six
6 years. Came up here for construction on several
7 construction projects since being here, including
8 condominiums, some stick homes, town homes, other such.
9

10 A lot of waste projects coming out of Juneau.
11 I know that the Lemon Creek watershed area is now a
12 city dump area, landfill. Just reflecting on how much
13 impact, you know, even I've seen as a general
14 contractor just how much more these impacts would have
15 in the future and these other areas like Yakutat that
16 doesn't see such the size of waste projects I guess you
17 could say.

18 I know that in a lot of these studies I see
19 we're looking at the different economic benefits or
20 repercussions, whether it be for the mining, the timber
21 and then also this other side with subsistence simply
22 always a resource. These places are being looked at,
23 the Tongass, as just a resource kind of a pit. Yet I
24 don't see a whole lot of studies on the health
25 benefits. The physical, the human health benefits that

1 we are gaining from these undisturbed areas and
2 ecosystems.

3 I understand the need for the roads that people
4 would have in some of these local villages. However it
5 would be nice to know even on a global impact being
6 under -- you know, we're under an administration right
7 now that doesn't even acknowledge climate change. So
8 how would development of the Tongass affect climate
9 change.

10 Real studies based upon what we've already
11 done, places like Juneau and some of the other
12 immediate larger towns here just to look at the
13 different practices as developers as well as, of
14 course, the indigenous presence that is still very
15 powerful, very intelligent and they have -- they've
16 definitely come along in education and studying these
17 areas; the scientific, the biological.

18 So really that next generation if you will, our
19 Generation X, who is now looking at all these world
20 problems and looking to people like the indigenous
21 people from the Tongass for answers because I do think
22 there are a lot of answers in this rainforest as in
23 many.

24 Kind of as JP mentioned, really keeping the
25 brakes on and we should have a fear that we let it go

1 too quickly. Not to disrespect anyone or anyone's
2 current business, but just that we learn from our
3 mistakes. We look at all the mistakes that have been
4 made and decide what is the best interpretation for
5 these actions.

6 That's all I have.

7 MR. HEITHECKER: Would you reintroduce yourself
8 and spell your last name.

9 MR. RUBBO: Okay. Jonathan Rubbo, last name
10 R-U-B-B-O. There you go. Sorry.

11 MR. HEITHECKER: Anybody else?

12 MR. SENSMEIER: My name is Raymond Sensmeier.
13 I was born Christmas Eve 75 years ago and have served
14 10 years on the Yakutat Kwaan Corporation and 10 years
15 on the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, 11 years on the Assembly.

16 As a tribe, we have tried to get the Forelands
17 designated as Tier 3. That's going from Situk down to
18 the Alsek. That's a pristine area. It has four large
19 rivers with sockeye, humpy, coho, chum and king salmon,
20 Dollies and char, big runs of eulachon toward the
21 Alsek. It's also our hunting areas for moose, for
22 deer.

23 Jennifer is director of our EPA department and
24 she's been working all summer getting water quality
25 samples from those areas. We would like to protect it,

1 to have it remain in its pristine area.

2 We've done this with help from the Forest
3 Service, from the Park Service. These are areas that
4 are relatively -- there's really been no industrial
5 activities in that area and we'd like it to remain so.

6 When we look at decisions like this, we always
7 try to look at what effect will it have on our
8 grandchildren. Some of you may be familiar with the
9 Alaska Native Brotherhood. It's an organization
10 started in 1912. The mission statement of that
11 organization has never changed. It's for the next
12 generation, which is how traditionally we have always
13 looked at things rather than make some money right now
14 and the hell with grandchildren.

15 Over 50 years ago my grandfather told me, he
16 said, son, there will come a time when you will choose
17 between money and your grandchildren and I had no idea
18 what he meant then, but I see it now. I see it all
19 around us. The land is the one that's getting the raw
20 deal on this.

21 That gentleman over there mentioned the current
22 administration and it's pretty obvious, you know, what
23 they care about. It's like I said, it's money right
24 now and it doesn't benefit everyone.

25 As someone who has lived here all my life and I

1 have six children and seven grandchildren, an eighth on
2 the way, I worry about what will be here for them, what
3 we need to pass on of our culture.

4 JP talked about respect and protocol with all
5 things, like hunting. We're not sport hunters. We're
6 not sport fishermen. That's something that's hard for
7 me to conceive of because I don't understand how
8 someone can derive sport or fun from killing things or
9 wounding them. It's beyond me, but I see it happening.
10 So I know what my grandfather was talking about back
11 then. I try to pass those things down to my children
12 and now my grandchildren.

13 Every word -- JP speaks our language fluently
14 and our languages, our names, everything is connected
15 with the land. After living here archaeologists,
16 geologists, glaciologists and all kind of ologists, you
17 know, say we've been around for like 10,000 years.
18 That's the mindset we've always had and try to
19 maintain.

20 It gets harder as things progress, especially
21 with the things that are going on in this country right
22 now. Not a whole lot of people are logging because
23 you've got the Trump tarriffs and now the Chinese have
24 imposed their own tarriffs specifically, I believe, on
25 Alaska hemlock and spruce, to the tune of \$2 million a

1 ship. They're trying to get back at Trump, I guess,
2 for his tariffs.

3 I don't think this is something we should rush
4 into. This is something we need to sit down and talk
5 about. The lady earlier in the evening talked about
6 not much discourse from the tribal entities and that's
7 not because we don't have any, we just haven't had a
8 chance to be in a proper forum to discuss these things.

9 We're the people of the land. That's what we
10 depend on and that's what we look forward -- we look to
11 protecting our lands for that very reason, for our
12 children, for our grandchildren when it's their time.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. HEITHECKER: Can you spell your name on the
15 record.

16 MR. SENSMEIER: Sensmeier, S-E-N-S-M-E-I-E-R.
17 Raymond.

18 MR. HEITHECKER: Thank you, sir.

19 (Off record)

20 (END OF RECORDING)

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1 TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Salena A. Hile, hereby certify that the
3 foregoing pages numbered 02 through 12 are a true,
4 accurate, and complete transcript of ANILCA PUBLIC
5 HEARING, YAKUTAT, ALASKA transcribed under my direction
6 from a copy of an electronic sound recording to the
7 best of our knowledge and ability.

8

9

DATE _____

SALENA A. HILE, (Transcriber)

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